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Message Text

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40
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 L-03 NSC-07 AID-20 OMB-01 SS-20

SIL-01 LAB-06 EB-11 TRSE-00 AGR-20 COME-00 OPIC-12

PC-04 DRC-01 CU-04 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04

RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 /166 W
---------- 059329
P R 281221Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3648
INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY SAIGON
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY RANGOON UNN
AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI
AMCONSUL SONGKHLA UNN
AMCONSUL UDORN
CINCPAC
DIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 8633

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH
SUBJ: RUMORS ON THE FORMATION OF THE SECOND SANYA CABINET

REF: A) BANGKOK 8524; B) BANGKOK 8545

SUMMARY: THAILAND IS WORKING ITS WAY OUT OF LAST WEEK'S GOVERNMENT CRISIS. THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, IN A UNIQUE ROLE FOR THAT BODY, PICKED SANYA TO SUCCEED HIMSELF AS PRIME MINISTER. THE KING, WHO FORMALLY ANNOUNCED SANYA'S REAPPOINTMENT MAY 28, AND THE ARMY, STAYED OUT OF THE LIMELIGHT. RUMORS ABOUT OFFERS FOR CABINET POSTS ARE NOW CIRCULATING AROUND TOWN. THE STUDENT LOBBY HAS ISSUED A PROD TO THE NEW CABINET, INCLUDING A CALL FOR SPEEDY WITHDRAWAL OF
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AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES. WE EXPECT THIS LAST THEME TO COME TO THE

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FORE DURING JUNE, BUT IT IS UNLIKELY TO STAND OUT AMID MORE
PRESSING DOMESTIC ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

1. THE RESOLUTION OF THE RECENT CABINET CRISIS EXHIBITED A NEW ROLE
FOR THE NATIONAL LEGISTLATIVE ASSEMBLY AS A LEGITIMIZER OF GOVERN-
MENTS. WHILE THE POTENTIAL FOR MISUDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE LEGIS-
LATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES REMAINS, THE RESIGNATION EPISODE HAS
BEEN A UNIQUE LESSON IN PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS FOR THE COUNTRY.
THE NEW GOVERNMENT REPORTEDLY WILL BE APPOINTING LIAISON OFFICERS
WITH THE ASSEMBLY, A TACTIC THAT COULD SMOOTH EXECUTIVE RELATIONS
WITH THE LEGISLATURE.

2. BOTH THE KING AND THE ARMY HAVE STAYED IN THE BACKGROUND DURING
THE GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE. BOTH, HOWEVER, WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN
PERSUADING SANYA TO STAY ON. THE KING FORMALLY ANNOUNCED HIS AP-
POINTMENT OF SANYA AS PRIME MINISTER ON MAY 28.

3. THE STUDENT LEADERSHIP, WHICH HAD BEEN QUIETLY CIRCUMSPECT,
AGAIN SURFACED ONCE THE CRISIS WAS OVER. THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER
OF THAILAND (NSCT), PEOPLE FOR DEMOCRACY (PFD), FEDERATION OF IN-
DEPENDENT STUDENTS OF THAILAND (FIST), AND THE GRADUATES' GROUP OF
THAILAND (GGT) ISSUED A JOINT STATEMENT MAY 27 CALLING ON THE NEW
CABINET TO: SEIZE THE ASSETS OF THE THREE DEPOSED MILITARY
LEADERS, PURCHASE LAND FROM LOAN SHARKS FOR THE FARMERS, RELEASE OR
TRY POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD UNDER ARTICLE 17, PROMOTE LABOR
UNIONS, MAKE THE AMERICAN MILITARY SPEEDILY WITHDRAW, AND PROTECT
THE COUNTRY FROM FOREIGN ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION. THE NSCT WILL SPON-
SOR A PANEL DISCUSSION AT THAMMASAT ON THESE POINTS OVER THE NEXT
THREE DAYS. THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL
TOPICS. WE WOULD EXPECT TO TAKE OUR LUMPS ON IT, BUT WE SEE IT AT-
TRACTING LESS LOCAL EXCITEMENT THAN SOME DOMESTIC PROBLEMS. ALTHOUGH
THE STUDENTS SUPPORT SANYA, THEY CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT THEY HAVE
A ROLE TO PLAY IN FOCUSING PUBLIC ATTENTION ON SPECIFIC ISSUES.

4. SANYA'S MINISTERIAL OFFERS HAVE FILTERED AROUND TOWN. THE PRESS
HAS BEGUN TO AGREE WITH ITSELF ON THE SELECTIONS. THE PRESS IS IN
ACCORD THAT THE FOREIGN, HEALTH, AND AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS WILL NOT
CHANGE.

A. THE NEWSPAPER QUARTERBACKS, HOWEVER, SPECULATE THAT FORMER JUSTICE
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MINISTER PRAKOP HUTASING WILL BECOME DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER (SEE BAN-
KOK 8544 FOR A BIOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PRACOP). THEY PLACE PHUANG
SUWANNARAT AND THREE POLICE GENERALS IN THE RUNNING FOR THE INTERIOR
MINISTER SLOT. SAWET PIAMPHONGSAN, AMNUAI WIRAWAN, SOMMAI HUTRAKUN OR
SUPAT SUTHATHAM COULD BECOME FINANCE MINISTER. PHAEN WANNAMETHI AND
CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN COMPETE FOR DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER.

B. THE CHINESE PRESS TOUTS DR. THALOENG THAMRONG-NAWASAWAT AS THE

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NEXT DEPUTY AGRICULTURAL MINISTER, BUT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE "THE NATION" MAY 28 SAYS HE OR WICHAN NIWATWONG WILL BECOME COMMERCE MINISTER. THE CHINESE PRESS PLACES WICHAN AS THE COMMERCE MINISTER, WITH SANO UNAKUN AS DEPUTY. BUNTHIN ATTHAKON, BUNSOM MARTIN, M.L. CHIRAYA NOPPHAWONG AND KRIANG KIRATIKON COMPETE FOR THE TWO EDUCATION MINISTRY POSITIONS. THE NATIONS'S RAINMAKER M.R. THEPPHARIT THEWAKUN, KASEM CHATIKAWANIT, AND SANO UNAKUN ARE VARIOUSLY NAMED AS POSSIBLE MINISTERS OF INDUSTRY.

C. SPECULATION HAS THE DEFENSE MINISTRY GOING TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING RETIRED OFFICERS: GENERAL KHRUAN SUTHANIN, ADMIRAL THAWIN RAMAYON, AIR CHIEF MARSHAL BUA SIRISAP, OR LT. GENERAL M.C. KATAWAT CHAKRAPAN. OTHER NOMINATIONS INCLUDE: STATE UNIVERSITY BUREAU - INCUMBENT ARUN SORATHET, PRAPHAT UAICHAI, PHAICHIT UTHAKUN; COMMUNICATIONS - DR. SIRILAK CHANTHARANGSU, SIPHUM SUKHANET; AND JUSTICE - KITTI SIHANON, SOMPHOP HOTRAKIT, OR DR. AMORN CHANSOMBUN. BUNMA WONSAWAN, WHOSE RESIGNATION LED TO THE CABINET RESHUFFLE, SAYS HE WILL NOT ACCEPT A PORTFOLIO IN THE SECOND SANYA CABINET.

5. COMMENT: THE RUMORED JOB OFFERS SUGGEST THAT PRIME MINISTER SANYA'S SECOND CABINET WILL BE SLIGHTLY YOUNGER, AND WILL RAISE MORE TECHNOCRATS TO POSITIONS OF ACTUAL POWER. THE MILITARY WILL HAVE AN INSIGNIFICANT FORMAL REPRESENTATION IN THE GOVERNMENT. THE CIVILIANS, THUS, ARE MORE FULLY ACCOUNTABLE FOR GOVERNMENT POLICIES THAN BEFORE. STAYING AWAY FROM THE FORMAL INSTRUMENTS OF POWER OBVIOUSLY CONSERVES THE REPUTATION OF THE MILITARY. PARTICULARLY SINCE THE PRIME MINISTER DEFINITELY WILL CONTINUE AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER PROBABLY WILL, WE FORESEE NO MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY SHIFTS. TECHNOCRATS, WHO MAY TAKE THE HELM OF SUCH MINISTRIES AS FINANCE AND COMMERCE, MAY ATTEMPT TO ADJUST A FEW OF THE ECONOMIC DIALS.
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